



A Better CT Institute

907 Wethersfield Avenue Hartford, CT 06114
860.249.0059

To: Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee

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From:

Kim Forte, Executive Director
A Better Connecticut Institute
c/o The 4Cs 907
Wethersfield Ave
Hartford, CT 06114 860.249.0059
kim.forte@abetterctinstitute .org

Re: Testimony on HB 5003 - An Act Concerning Education Funding in Connecticut
General Comments:

I am the Executive Director of A Better Connecticut Institute (ABCI). ABCI is a new non-profit that investigates, researches, and reports the sources of racialized income and wealth inequality in Connecticut. ABCI's mission is to create space, in person and electronically, to share knowledge with residents and policy makers about proactive progressive policies that will help build greater equity for all Connecticut residents. ABCI is a member of Recovery For All, a statewide coalition bringing together more than 60 community, faith, and labor organizations across Connecticut.

Connecticut is at an educational moral crossroads. We have both a crisis on our hands and an opportunity to correct our path. Connecticut, as the wealthiest state in the country, should be a state where every child can thrive and learn, regardless of zip code. We witness wonderful examples of well-funded education in Fairfield and Litchfield Counties, but this is not a reality for all Connecticut's children. Bearing in mind the state commitment to equity under Article 92, requiring a budget that addresses the historical oppression based on race and gender, there are much needed deep investments in our public school system. For early childhood education, Connecticut must fully fund Care4Kids and ensure that we are striving to overcome the childcare crisis facing. We must increase state funded ECE programs, and for K-12 education, Connecticut must fully fund the ECS formula this year. Funding the ECS formula is the bare minimum that public schools need, so that our students can thrive.

Our public schools have a severe teacher shortage and staffing shortage. Real equity means that preK-12 public schools are fully staffed with public workers: teachers, paraprofessionals, school counselors, school nurses, mental health professionals, librarians, school bus drivers, custodians, and school lunch workers. Staff who speak multiple languages and meet the comprehensive needs of every child in every community.

Students are not getting the ELL and special education services they need, because of the lack of funding and staffing. Real equity means that school districts serving high needs – kids whose



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parents earn poverty wages, kids learning English, kids with special needs – should have more funding per child, to meet those needs.

Connecticut should keep the charter funding the way it is. Real equity requires accountability and transparency. Schools that receiving public dollars must be accountable to the children they teach and care for, their families and communities and to our elected leaders. Without accountability, we can't ensure equity for our kids. Public schools are accountable to the children they teach and care for, their families and communities and to our elected leaders. Without accountability, we can't ensure equity for our kids.

1 .<https://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/State%20of%20the%20Connecticut%20Teacher%20Workforce%20-%20Teacher%20Table%20Report.pdf> 2
<https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=21178>

3 .<https://cea.org/new-cea-survey-finds-rising-wave-of-stress-burnout-shortages-and-teachers-leaving-the-profession/>

4 . https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/media/2022/de-14326_aft_member_survey.pdf

5 Sylvia Allegretto. "The teacher pay penalty has hit a new high: Trends in teacher wages and compensation through 2021." Economic Policy Institute. Aug 16, 2022.